

## **Trail Advisory Board Biannual Meeting**

### **Tuesday April 8,2003**

Tour at 4 pm. Participants included: Donna Christensen, Chad Kelchen, Mike O'Brien, Pat Reed, Kevin Szcodronski, and Greg Van Fosson. The tour highlighted the most recent construction and volunteer efforts on the new lake trail.

#### **Meeting at 6pm.**

Chairperson Ruth Nelleson called the meeting to order at 6pm. Following an introduction Interim Bureau Chief Kevin Szcodronski gave a quick overview of the parks current situation and what direction the bureau is aiming for in the months to come. He mentioned that there would be a major effort for the bureau to sell itself to the public and encourage people to visit our state parks. As a part of this effort the Explore Iowa Parks Program has been expanded to include all state campgrounds. Also, there will be naturalist stationed at the parks to get people more involved with programs. Kevin also gave a brief summary of the budget situation. The parks budget will stay status quo. Cuts have been made to seasonal staff and in operating expenses. The budget situation is not likely to improve for the next fiscal year. Lastly, Kevin explained that he was an interim bureau chief and that interviews are going on now. A new bureau chief will be selected soon.

Questions were raised on what construction projects would be completed this year, specifically the non-equestrian campground. Greg Van Fosson explained that the electrical system and the campsites for the non-equestrian campground were scheduled for last year and in fact the contract had been let, but do to a lack of REAP funding the project was put on hold. The campground is once again in the plans for this upcoming year, but may again be postponed due to funding. Mike O'Brien asked if people would be allowed to camp in the campground on a primitive basis until it is completed. Greg mentioned that there are no tables or grills available to provide for campers. It was also pointed out that the campground would have to be closed again when construction began. A short discussion followed about funding sources. During this discussion it was noted that the road and parking lots for cabins and beach facilities would be under construction this year. The funding for these projects comes from the Park and Institutional Road Fund (Iowa DOT) a different source that cannot be used for any other purpose. There was also discussion about cabins at the park. Currently the department is working with a local RC&D to develop and construct a proto-type cabin(s) on site and then explore the possibility of a private corporation to operate them.

## **Election of officers**

Ruth Nelleson remains chairperson of the board.  
Chad Kelchen was nominated as secretary.

## **Old Business**

Greg Van Fosson announced the purchase of thirty large shade trees to be placed along the west trail between the north equestrian campground and the lagoons. These trees were made available from Angela Corio, the department's landscape architect. Chad Kelchen then mentioned that help would be needed to get these trees in the ground once they arrive. Greg also suggested the use of drip buckets for the trees, and asked if anyone had access to a supply of buckets for this purpose. Linda Jenny thought she might be able to get them.

The at-grade crossing on county road D-46 near the south equine campground entrance was revisited. A letter from the Webster county engineer was presented to the board. This letter explained that the county would not support or permit an at grade crossing at this area of D-46. The letter referenced an earlier decision against an at-grade crossing by the former Webster County engineer and Webster County Board of Supervisors. At that time an agreement was entered into with Webster County and the DNR to construct a trail beneath the new D-46 bridge during its construction. This bridge and trail was constructed and the trail has been in use for approximately 3 years. Further discussion followed. Donna Christiansen expressed her disapproval of the matter citing the need for a more direct route back to the campground. Alternative solutions were discussed. A large multi- plate culvert was suggested, the cost of this would approach \$80-\$100,000 and still may not be approved by the county. Moving the crossing was discussed. It was determined that there was not enough distance on state land to make a safe crossing. Mike O'Brien thought someone might be able to look into a grant, as neither the county nor the DNR would be willing to pay for this since a current trail exists.

Mike O'Brien asked if day riders would be allowed to utilize the east side of the south equestrian campground for day use parking until it was finished. The east side of that campground will be non-electric sites when development is complete. Greg and Chad pointed out the difficulties of getting the public accustomed to using the day use area instead of the campground. Currently, day users must pay the camping fee to park in the campgrounds if using them for day use purposes.

Pat Reed noted a potential danger of traffic turning into the campground entrance, especially traffic traveling east to west.

Chad Kelchen handed out a list of events for the upcoming season. Noted were three volunteer opportunities for people. Chad also requested help for the

Brushy Creek Kids fishing tournament on May 10. The park needs volunteers to help with the program. Linda Jenny suggested contacting the Webster City Isaac Walton League. Chad also noted the handouts for free camping weekend and the Explore Iowa Parks campaign. The lake trail is finally in, but not completed. Signing and other maintenance work remain; however, the trail is open for use.

Chad asked Christi Schaaf on the status of the Adopt- a -Trail. Kristi said that the Iowa Trail Riders Association would be willing to adopt a section of trail. Members of the board were interested in the project as well and wanted more information. Chad told them that ideally a group would choose a section of trail to maintain water bars, prune trees, clean up garbage, and check signage. The group would have their name on some sort of plaque or sign to show they were volunteering to take care of that trail.

Pat Reed asked about the condition of trail crossing of Brushy Creek on the southeast river trail. Chad responded that the crossing was solid for horses as well as equipment and that there is really no way to create a dry crossing for hikers. He cited the example of the stepping-stones at Ledges State Park. These large concrete blocks were placed at the water crossings for hikers. These blocks are continually swept away by the creeks current. It is thought that the blocks would have the same effect at the Brushy crossing.

The next meeting date is set for October 14, 2003 at 6pm. There will be no tour at this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30pm